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DEPARTMENT FOR AF FRONT OFFICE AND AF/S
LONDON FOR GURNEY; PARIS FOR WILLIAMS

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SUBJECT: THE NEW PARTNERSHIP FOR AFRICA'S DEVELOPMENT
(NEPAD): MOVING FORWARD

CLASSIFIED BY: ECONOMIC M/C ROBERT F. GODEC, REASONS 1.5 (B) AND (D)

11. (C) SUMMARY: ECONOFF MET JANUARY 24 WITH DAVID MALCOLMSON, DFA NEPAD COORDINATOR, TO REVIEW RECENT DEVELOPMENTS IN THE EVOLUTION OF THE NEPAD PROGRAM. AT THE JANUARY 24-27 CONFERENCE IN BENONI, SOUTH AFRICA AIMED TO MOVE BEYOND SLOGANS TO FORGE AGREEMENT ON CONCRETE PLANS AND NATIONAL COMMITMENTS TO PUSH NEPAD FORWARD. THE FIVE PRIORITY AREAS APPROVED BY THE NEPAD HEADS OF STATE IMPLEMENTATION COMMITTEE LAST OCTOBER WILL BE THE CONTEXT IN WHICH THIS EFFORT WILL PROCEED. THE GOAL IS TO REACH AGREEMENT ON A PROGRAM THAT CAN BE PRESENTED TO THE G8 SUMMIT IN CANADA NEXT JUNE AND TO THE INITIAL AFRICAN UNION (AU) SUMMIT NEXT JULY IN DURBAN. SOUTH AFRICA HAS EMBARKED ON A PROGRAM TO ENLIST SUPPORT FOR NEPAD FROM BUSINESS AND OTHER ELEMENTS OF CIVIL SOCIETY. PRESIDENT MBEKI ADDRESSED THE BENONI CONFERENCE AND ENCOURAGED AFRICANS TO BECOME "PROACTIVE IMPLEMENTERS OF OUR OWN SUSTAINED DEVELOPMENT." END SUMMARY.

12. (U) ECONOFF MET JANUARY 24 WITH DAVID MALCOLMSON, DFA NEPAD COORDINATOR, TO REVIEW RECENT DEVELOPMENTS IN THE NEPAD PROCESS, INCLUDING GOALS FOR THE WORK-IN-PROGRESS REVIEW WORKSHOP HELD JANUARY 24-27 IN BENONI, SOUTH AFRICA. HE DESCRIBED THE BENONI CONFERENCE AS THE BEGINNING OF THE "SECOND PHASE" OF THE NEPAD DEVELOPMENT PROCESS. MALCOLMSON UNDERScoreD THE NEED TO MOVE AHEAD TO THE ESTABLISHMENT OF MECHANISMS AND PROGRAMS THAT WILL TRANSLATE NOW "THEORETICAL" ISSUES OF GOVERNANCE, ECONOMIC MANAGEMENT AND SELF-RELIANCE INTO CONCRETE PLANS AND COMMITMENTS. ONLY AGREEMENT BY PARTICIPATING AFRICAN COUNTRIES ON A CREDIBLE PROGRAM OF ACTION WILL DEFLECT CRITICISM THAT THE NEPAD PROCESS HAS BEEN OVERLY AMBITIOUS IN ITS AIMS.

13. (U) THE HEADS OF STATE IMPLEMENTATION COMMITTEE MEETING LAST OCTOBER 23 APPROVED A MANDATE FOCUSING ON FIVE PRIORITY AREAS FOR NEPAD: 1) PEACE AND SECURITY, 2) ECONOMIC AND CORPORATE GOVERNANCE, 3) BANKING AND FINANCIAL STANDARDS, 4) INFRASTRUCTURE AND 5) MARKET ACCESS AND AGRICULTURE. IN ADDITION, HEADS OF STATE APPROVED THE CREATION OF A CONFLICT PREVENTION AND RESOLUTION SUBCOMMITTEE, TO BE CHAIRED BY PRESIDENT MBEKI. THE GOAL OF THE BENONI WORKSHOP IS TO ARTICULATE AN OUTLINE AND DETAILED CONTENT FOR A NEPAD PROGRAM OF ACTION THAT CAN BE PRESENTED TO THE G8 SUMMIT IN CANADA NEXT JUNE AND TO THE AFRICAN UNION (AU) SUMMIT IN DURBAN NEXT JULY. THE WORKSHOP WILL ALSO DISCUSS HOW NEPAD, AS THE AGREED-UPON OVERALL DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK FOR AFRICA, CAN ENHANCE AFRICAN PARTICIPATION IN THE FINANCING FOR DEVELOPMENT CONFERENCE IN MEXICO AND AT THE WORLD SUMMIT ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT IN JOHANNESBURG.

14. (C) MALCOLMSON SAID THE CURRENT NEPAD MANAGEMENT STRUCTURES (THE IMPLEMENTATION AND STEERING COMMITTEES AS WELL AS THE SECRETARIAT) ARE LIKELY TO ENDURE FOR SOME TIME AFTER THE AFRICAN UNION COMES INTO BEING AT THE JULY SUMMIT. HE AGREED THAT THE AU WILL LIKELY BE CONSUMED, AT LEAST OVER THE SHORT-TERM, WITH THE DESIGN AND IMPLEMENTATION OF ITS OWN POLITICAL ARCHITECTURE. THE SUBSTANCE OF COORDINATING, MONITORING AND DRIVING THE NEPAD PROCESS WILL HAVE TO REMAIN IN THE HANDS OF THE CURRENT DEDICATED MECHANISMS. HE NOTED

AS WELL THAT THE OLD OAU TRADITION OF CONSENSUS SEEKING WOULD DO LITTLE TO PROVIDE THE FORCEFUL IMPETUS THAT NEPAD NEEDS. HE ALSO CONCEDED THAT THERE ARE SOME OAU (AND FUTURE AU) MEMBERS THAT THE CURRENT NEPAD GOVERNMENTS WOULD LIKE TO SEE REMAIN ON THE SIDELINES. HE CITED THE PEER REVIEW MECHANISM IN NEPAD AS A SIGNIFICANT DEPARTURE FROM THE WAY THE OAU HAS DONE BUSINESS IN THE PAST, I.E. TAKING PAINS TO AVOID EVEN THE APPEARANCE OF INFRINGING UPON THE SOVEREIGNTY OF MEMBER STATES. NEPAD, FOR THOSE STATES WHO DECIDE TO PARTICIPATE, WILL BE MUCH MORE INTERVENTIONIST IN CHARACTER.

15. (C) MALCOLMSON TOOK NOTE OF CRITICISM THAT THE CREATION OF NEPAD HAS BEEN A TOP-DOWN, TECHNOCRATIC PROCESS WITHOUT MUCH INPUT FROM CIVIL SOCIETY IN THE EARLY DEBATES ON THE PROGRAM'S STRUCTURE. THIS IN SPITE OF THE DOCUMENT ITSELF, WHICH NOTES THAT "THE AGENDA IS BASED ON NATIONAL AND REGIONAL PRIORITIES AND DEVELOPMENT PLANS THAT MUST BE PREPARED THROUGH PARTICIPATIVE PROCESSES INVOLVING THE PEOPLE." SOME CRITICS HAVE UNDERScoreD THAT THE DEBATE AROUND GOVERNANCE STANDARDS WILL HAVE TO BE WIDENED WITH MORE "BUY IN" BY AFFECTED GROUPS, LEST THE ENTIRE PROJECT "START AND END AND FAIL WITH LEADERSHIP." MALCOLMSON AGREED THAT THIS HAS BEEN A "POLITICALLY DRIVEN PROCESS" FROM THE OUTSET (MOSTLY OUT OF NECESSITY IN ORDER TO GET IT STARTED), BUT ADDED THAT SOUTH AFRICA HAS INSTITUTED A MARKETING AND COMMUNICATIONS STRATEGY AIMED AT BRINGING BUSINESS, CIVIL SOCIETY AND OTHERS INTO THE PICTURE. THIS OUTREACH EFFORT INCLUDES THE BENONI CONFERENCE, TO WHICH A VARIETY OF NON-GOVERNMENT GROUPS WERE INVITED.

16. (U) IN HIS REMARKS TO THE BENONI MEETING, PRESIDENT MBEKI ENCOURAGED AFRICANS TO BE "AGENTS FOR CHANGE" AND TO "TAKE OWNERSHIP" OF THEIR FUTURES. HE ASSERTED THAT THE WORK CARRIED OUT BY AFRICAN HEADS OF STATE IN PROMOTING THE NEPAD AGENDA "HAS SUCCEEDED IN GENERATING HOPE AND CONFIDENCE IN THE FUTURE OF OUR CONTINENT AND IN ATTAINING ACCEPTANCE OF NEPAD AS A POLICY FRAMEWORK INFORMING THE WAY THEY VIEW AFRICAN DEVELOPMENT." HE WELCOMED THE PARTICIPATION IN THE CONFERENCE BY REPRESENTATIVES OF THE AFRICAN DEVELOPMENT BANK, THE DEVELOPMENT BANK OF SOUTHERN AFRICA, THE ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR AFRICA AND OTHER ORGANIZATIONS AS WELL. HE ENCOURAGED THE CONFEREES TO WORK OUT "CONCRETE IMPLEMENTABLE PLANS" THAT WILL DEMONSTRATE THAT AFRICANS ARE BEING "PROACTIVE IMPLEMENTERS OF OUR OWN SUSTAINED DEVELOPMENT."

17. (C) COMMENT: MALCOLMSON WAS CANDID ABOUT SOME OF THE DIFFICULTIES THAT SOUTH AFRICA, AS ONE OF NEPAD'S "FOUNDING STATES," HAS HAD IN BRINGING THIS PROGRAM TO ITS PRESENT STAGE OF DEVELOPMENT. OUTSIZED EGOS AND OBSTRUCTIONIST BEHAVIOR FROM SOME COUNTRIES HAVE REQUIRED A SUSTAINED AND DETERMINED POLITICAL-LEVEL PUSH IN ORDER TO KEEP NEPAD ON TRACK. HE CONCEDED THAT NEPAD'S CREDIBILITY (AND VIABILITY) WILL DEPEND ON PRESENTING A SOLID AND DOABLE PROGRAM TO G8 COUNTRIES. THE CAPE TOWN MEETING OF G8 PERSONAL REPRESENTATIVES IN FEBRUARY WILL BE AN IMPORTANT INDICATOR OF WHETHER THE BENONI CONFERENCE SUCCEEDED IN MOVING THE NEPAD PROCESS BEYOND PLATITUDES TO A PROGRAM THAT WILL ATTRACT SUPPORT FROM WESTERN GOVERNMENTS.

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